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State Board adopts three regulations, proposes others

The State Board of Education & Early Development, meeting Monday in Juneau, adopted three regulations, asked for public comment on four proposed regulations, approved fiscal year 2007 education operating and capital budgets and a capital improvement project list, appointed a high school student as student advisor-elect, and changed the dates of meetings in 2006.

The board adopted these regulations:

- Amended 4 AAC 04.220(d) to change the effective date from January 8, 2006, to June 30, 2006, by which paraprofessional educators must meet qualification standards under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The amended regulation matches a change in federal requirements.
- Amended 4 AAC 04.212(f) and 4 AAC 12.320(d) and (f) to change the score requirements on teacher performance reviews and to adopt by reference the September 2005 edition of the Alaska Teacher Performance Review Handbook and Scoring Guide.
- Amended 4 AAC 06.737 and 4 AAC 06.739(a) to expand the grade levels of required standards-based assessments to include grade 10. The changes also clarify that all students are required to take standards-based assessments unless they are eligible for, and take, the alternate assessment. And the changes clarify that proficiency scores at four levels – advanced, proficient, below proficient, and far below proficient – apply to the standards-based assessments and not the High School Graduation Qualifying Examination.

The board opened a period of public comment on the following regulations. When the board takes up these proposals at its March 16-17 meeting, it may choose to adopt them as is, change them and adopt them, or reject them.

The public may comment on the proposed regulation changes, including the potential costs to private persons of complying with the proposed changes, by submitting written comments on the online comment form located at <http://www.eed.state.ak.us/regs/comment.html>. The proposed regulations will be posted online by December 19.

The public also may submit written comments to the Commissioner's Office, Department of Education & Early Development, ATTN: Regulations Review, 801 West Tenth Street, Suite 200, Juneau, Alaska 99801-1894. Comments also may be faxed to (907) 465-4156. Comments must be received no later than 4 p.m., February 10, 2006.

- Amend 4 AAC 04.155 to adopt revised standards in English language proficiency. The standards are required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act and are used to implement assessments for students of limited English proficiency (LEP). They also provide guidance for developing curriculum. LEP students are those whose first language is not English or Alaska Natives who come from an environment in which a language other than English has significantly impacted their level of English proficiency. The proposed standards are available at http://www.eed.state.ak.us/State_Board/pdf/December_Packet.pdf.
- Amend 4 AAC 04.140, 4 AAC 04.150 and 4 AAC 04.180 to adopt proposed standards for the study of Alaska history. In December 2004, the board adopted 4 AAC 06.075 (g) to require students to take a half-credit course in Alaska history, or demonstrate they meet state standards in the subject, as one of the requirements to earn a high school diploma. The proposed regulation would place the Alaska history standards in the publication "Alaska Standards: Content and Performance Standards for Alaska Students, December 2005." The standards would guide districts in developing courses or assessments. The proposed standards are available at http://www.eed.state.ak.us/State_Board/pdf/December_Packet.pdf.
- Amend 4 AAC 04.210 and 4 AAC 04.212(a) to say that elementary teachers who are certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards will earn 100 points on Alaska's High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation. The HOUSS is a method of demonstrating that teachers are highly qualified under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. One hundred points is the threshold for being designated highly qualified.
- Amend 4 AAC 52.550(e)(9) regarding special education due process hearings to place the burden of proof on the party requesting the hearing, except for hearings on discipline issues. The current regulation places the burden of proof on school districts. The proposed amendment conforms to a U.S. Supreme Court ruling of November 14, 2005.

The board appointed Melissa Steward of Klawock City School as the student advisor-elect. On July 1, 2006, she will replace Abbey Wangstrom, a student at South High School in Anchorage, as student advisor and will serve for a year.

The board set new dates for meetings in 2006: a January 27 teleconference, a March 16-17 meeting in Juneau, and a June 15-16 meeting in Juneau. These dates differ from what were previously announced.

The board heard reports on the Lindamood-Bell Learning Processes program, which is being implemented in Dillingham; the ongoing tiered teacher certification; the Excel Focused Instruction project of the Chugach School District; and the ongoing development of Alaska early learning standards. The board discussed the application and enrollment policies of boarding schools in Alaska.

The board packet, with background materials that provide context, is available at http://www.eed.state.ak.us/State_Board/pdf/December_Packet.pdf.

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